Steve L. Dobrioglo

Ms. Wray

Honors English A3

15 February 2015

Lost in the Sands

*March 6, 1916*

My journal finally came in through the mail! I’ve been telling Amir that my parents didn’t forget about me , but he wouldn't believe me. He was always a sarcastic arse. I bet he’s just *jealous* because my parents are actually rich enough to send me a journal, unlike his camel-stench parents! Ha-ha, just joking, after all Amir is like a brother to me. Now that I think about it, my entire brigade feels like a family and it’d be a shame if we didn’t get along. It'd especially be a shame because all of us joining the military together was an important factor in our recruitment into the army. Being assigned to the Imperial Camel Corps was a blessing, and the fact we were all put into the same brigade was a gift from Allah. It was just us, four heroes of the Arab states against the Ottoman empire. One day we better be recognized as one of the great characters of the Arab Revolt, like the famed Lawrence of Arabia! We *will* be known for our heroic actions, even if it will be the death of us! After all, nothing is more patriotic than a martyr...

Damn him, Isaiah stole Amir’s food! All of it: the sheep meat, the goat milk, and even the little container of rice! I better calm down Amir before he loses his temper like he did last time in Hedjaz!

*March 8, 1916*

Today we were assigned to cross across the Hejaz Railroad to ambush an Ottoman

battalion.  I think the idea was to use the famed Hejaz Railway that the Ottomans so favored and use it to our advantage. It sounded as if the famed leader Lawrence of Arabia had plans on destroying the railroad so if we were to use it, even as a landmark to help guide us, we had to act now. And truthfully, the irony of the Hejaz Railway did not dawn onto me until now: the railroad was built simply just for religious pilgrimages but now the Ottomans use it to transport their soldiers. Talk about mistreatment of something, to use a method of religious salvation to help fight a war! Anyway, the leader of our battalion was a stout Arabic man with a grey moustache. He actually looked a lot like my older brother, I think… Life in the military is slowly robbing me of my memories of the people I used to know.

Anyway, I remember he was profoundly sweating as he shouted out orders to the masses. I remember that he told us about the different options he had: to either send us to silently raid the Ottomans or to go out and help the British capture Syria. He thought that attacking Syria would’ve been suicide so he sent us out on his assignment. My dear friend Ali rolled his eyes when the leader, whose name I *think* was Muhammad, told us that we were to avoid any contact with the Ottomans until we officially start ambushing them.

Ali spitefully muttered “And why don’t we just fight like *real* men and give them a fair chance?” That’s just typically Ali though. I can still remember one day back at home we were in the market when we came across an exquisite camel skin water bottle. The merchant and Ali argued for what can only have been hours and I had to literally pull Ali away when he started to threaten the merchant. “I WILL GET YOU BACK” he yelled back to the merchant as I pulled him away...but he never did.

“What was that?” our mustached leader asked, his voice booming over the camp of restless men and stirring camels. “Do you have a problem young man?”

“Yes I do” Ali too proudly responded. He even stood up when he said that, almost theatrically. “If we have any honor, then we would ride our camels straight into them and fight!”

“Young man, we are outnumbered with limited supplies. Now, I say that silent attacks are the only chance for victory, and that is that!” Muhammad yelled back, mustache quivering with rage. *Mental note to self, Muhammad has a short temper*, I thought, cowering away from Ali and his big scene.

Muhammad then went back to his lecture. He stressed that the only chance of us winning our freedom was through what he called “guerilla warfare”, which of course only insulted Ali as he was a man who believed that there was only one honorable way to fight a war: a head on full-out battle. It didn’t matter what Ali thought though, and he knew that. We had to answer to our headquarters group as the Imperial Camel Corp worked in a bureaucratic way. We worked independently from other brigades but we worked under a much larger group. Was it confusing? Frankly, it was, but there was nothing I could’ve done about it. All I knew was that I was blessed to have my best friends in my brigade. I heard that there were brigades comprised of a crazy range of ethnicities! Only imagine an Indian working with an Australian in the Camel Corp!

I guess I’ll have to keep a careful eye on Ali before he blows our cover. If there were ever an advocate against these raids, it would be Ali, but it was our only chance to beat the Ottomans. But Ali was never one who preferred the night attacks of these raids. Besides Ali’s disgust with our leader’s tactics the rest of our brigade, Isaiah, Amir and I, were ecstatic that we were finally going into battle. It has been nearly a year and we were always pushed aside from any action. How can we be the famous heroes we inspire to be if we can’t even fight? While I am of course scared, I am mostly thrilled that we will finally have a chance to prove ourselves. We missed our chance when our leader Muhammad refused to send us to the Gallipoli Campaign, damn him. Sure, it may have ended in a virtual stalemate, but maybe with us four we could’ve changed the outcome. It may not be probable, but I sure is possible. I don’t think anything can stop us when we work as one brigade.  Oh, I have to stop writing for tonight: we will be up early tomorrow to travel across the Hejaz desert to avoid the midday heat.

*March 11, 1916*

...we got lost.

Sorry, let me rephrase that: our Camel Brigade, meaning only Isaiah, Amir, Ali and I, were separated from the rest of the group. It’s not like it’s *our* fault: a haboob came across the horizon and in the confusion of the sandstorm we only tried to find each other and by the time we were able to see through the sand we lost the rest of our battalion. Our leader Muhammad-gone. The other Camel brigades-gone. Any infantrymen-long gone.

The haboob was first spotted by a rifleman. When he first yelled “Men, look at the horizon!”, no one reacted at first. A few minutes later some people looked up towards the horizon, and indeed there was a solid wall of light brown and orange creeping slowly towards us. But what were we to do? We were too far out in the desert to go back so our only hope was to push forward and hopefully reach an area where there was at least some cover from the sandstorm. If any of them asked me, I would say that it was wistful thinking and we should've tried to find cover. After all, there were small patches of land that could have sufficed for a camp in the desert, but they were far and few in-between.

Unfortunately we did not find a place with cover and we were attacked by the sandstorm head on. I remember tying cloth to my face to prevent sand from whipping my face. However the fury of the sand was too much for my face-cloth and soon it was whipped away into the wind soon my face was bombarded with the little fists of sand. They streaked across my face at high speeds, leaving gashes and I had to squint my eyes to see which carried a dear price: the pain of sand flying into my eyes. Soon the world went dark as we were engulfed in the belly of the storm and the yells of Arabic men and the roars of the camels were drowned out by the chorus of the haboob.

I remember seeing a vague mysterious shape and I tried to push my camel towards that direction but he only bucked me off. I held onto the rope I kept around his mouth and pulled him towards the weird shape which was extremely difficult between my camel’s resistance and the wind resistance pushing against me. I tripped over the canvas that fell off of a “medical camel” and nearly lost my own camel. Damn those medical camels, not able to keep their stretchers on their backs! It must have been hours before the dusty air cleared and we were finally able to see. Apparently the figure I tried to reach was the rest of my brigade and their camels, who were just as disoriented as I was. We looked around and the rest of our battalion were nowhere to be seen.

And out of nowhere, I heard laughter. I looked over and I saw Amir who was bending over with laughter.

“What the hell are you laughing about?” asked Ali, but Amir only fell down on his butt and continued on giggling. The rest of us stared at each other, not knowing what has caused Amir’s weird outburst. This was about the time that severity of the situation dawned on me. We’re alone in the middle of the desert without food, lost without the rest of our brigade, vulnerable to any attack from the Ottomans.

I remember Amir’s laughter was cut off by the howl of the wind. The sand dunes danced around us as we stood in the middle of the Allah-forsaken desert, silently contemplating on what to do next. I noticed how Ali’s *kufiyya* danced around in the wind, and it’s memorizing dance enchanted more for a while, until he snapped at me to stop staring. The tension was palpable, so I had nothing else to do but look down at myself and judge my own fashion sense. A tunic, a clock, and of course my headpiece, the kufiyya. It was indeed the minimalist's outfit.

Finally it was Isaiah who said “Why don’t we continue to search for our group? We can look for footprints or maybe just head north. We can use our shadows as makeshift compasses and head north, after all, they have to be nearby. Hell, someone with them probably came up with the same idea…”. Of course Ali, the sensible man he was, retorted “No. If we do that, it’s better to do it at night where we can navigate by stars ”, and soon Ali and Isaiah were caught up in a heated argument while I whipped out this journal and started to write, with our camels groaning by our sides and Amir still laughing. Amir eventually sobered up and sat next to me. He then checked the magazine of his Enfield rifle while I checked to see if my goat skin water bottle still had enough for a day or two.

The argument ended when Amir loudly muttered “Sweet Allah...” and we all turned to look at him. His tan yet rosy cheeks glistened with sweat, his eyes wide and looking at something in the far distance. I followed where his eyes were looking at and my heart stopped. Ali cursed and Isaiah let out a slow sigh, while I just stared at the horror way out in the horizon. In the distance I saw a small piece of paper wave in the wind. I would recognize the flag anywhere; it was an Ottoman military outpost. Even though we were what seemed miles away, I could still see the movement of the Ottoman soldiers as they scurried around the camp in what must have been their daily military routine. Between the unloading of items that could have only been guns and the formation of their camels it was clear that they were trying to do one thing: they were preparing for an invasion.

Amir said “Oh no...” and looked to all of us. Ali stood up a little straighter, looked at us and said “Well now it’s obvious what we’re going to do. We’re going in”. Allah, damn him and his honor.

“What? Why would we do that?’ retorted Isaiah “it’d be suicide.”

“If we ambush them and take over their camp then we would have a safe place for a few nights. They already have everything set and I’d bet that they have food at the camp. If we try to avoid them and continue to look for the rest of our battalion then we would surely starve before we find them. And isn’t that the type of thing we’re supposed to do?”

“What? Try to get ourselves killed as quickly as possible”

“No. To fight against the Ottomans whenever we can!”

Isaiah once again answered back with “Actually we’re technically only supposed to monitor desert areas so that we could make sure there are no Ottomans preparing an attack”.

Ali finally retorted “But that’s not what we’re doing now”. Isaiah had nothing to say to that. It was final: Allah had decided that it was our fate to fight this battle against the Ottomans. After all, didn’t we want to be heroes? I guess there was no better opportunity than this. Oh, it looks like we have to get ready, so I have to put the journal down now…

*March 12, 1916 (Midday)*

We had rode our camels a couple miles closer to the Ottoman camp and dismounted our rides to go over our plan once again. *They* were to ambush the Ottomans while I keep watch of the camels, as the tradition of the Camel Corps was that one man in a brigade stayed behind to take care of the camels. The camel was too important in our culture, and allowing them to be vulnerable would be a direct moral violation. The rest of my brigade took off their goat-skin water bottles with their other gear and left the items with me.  They only brought their rifles.

They all said goodbye to me before they left. Everyone left crying and… oh Allah I cannot go through those painful goodbyes again. They individually said their goodbyes, each one more painful than the last.

“Uthman, I know we weren’t good friends back home, but I just want to say… it was an honor to fight with you. Allah bless you” said Isaiah, and he walked away to tend to his rifle. Was he an extremist Muslim? He was right, we didn’t talk much back home, I just remember seeing him in school occasionally, but we hardly spoke until we were put in the same brigade. I did know that he sometimes would spend time with Amir, but then again, who wouldn’t? Amir is everyone’s friend. Nonetheless I just couldn’t do anything now except to wallow in my guilt for not being friendlier to Isaiah back home, until Ali came up to me.

“Look Uthman. You know this is the right thing to do. This is the only honorable way to fight for our freedom-” I could feel the guilt of Isaiah and the pain of possibly losing my closest friends boil inside of me and when Ali said that, I interrupted “Why the hell do you have to do this? This isn’t some game like we used to play when we were little. This is *real life.* YOU can die. Hell, WE ALL can die! Because of your damn honor you might have killed us all!”. He had nothing to say about that. He just looked down at the sand in front of him, almost shamefully and in the midst of my anger I thought *did I really just make Ali actually shameful?* But before I could’ve apologized, or verbally attack him some more, I wasn’t able to decide how I really felt, he walked away silently.

Finally came Amir, my childhood best friend. Hell, he still *is* my best friend, even now, well before he goes off into battle. I looked into his face, a face I have known for my entire life and I couldn't but feel guilty. Back at home, he was the prankster, getting away with all sorts of wicked jokes; sometimes stealing fruit from a cranky merchant or breaking the chalk of a mean teacher. As a child, he was the enforcer of justice on mean adults, even if his methods might seem cruel or unnecessary. But still, everyone loved him: he was possibly one of the most charismatic people I have ever met. We went through practically all of the stages of life together, but I suppose this is where our roads split. But when I stood there in the desert, moments away from his impending doom, I saw the laughter that was always in his eyes was gone. This may have been the first time he has been serious about something. Assuming that we were best friends, one would imagine that our goodbye would be much more prolonged. But all he said when he walked up to me was, “I’ll see you soon,” before he embraced me. I felt his sobs on my shoulder and there we stood, two grown soldiers in the middle of the desert, crying and holding each other. Eventually, he let go and before he walked away, he looked back and I noticed that his eyes were bright, but it seemed as if from merriness, not from the tears. “If we ever come back and I find out that you told someone about our little moment, I’m going to kill you myself” before running over to Ali and Isaiah.

They left to sneak behind the Ottomans and after chuckling from Amir’s threat, I watched them slowly crawl their ways through the sand dunes before a breeze came and sand soon blocked my view of them.. Then, with nothing else to do I took out my journal once again and started to write...

A few restless steps and the groans omitted from one of our Egyptian camels prompted me to call out “Hadi, calm”. At least Hadi wasn’t a Bikaner camel; those things were impossible to control. Luckily we didn't have those types of camels. Bikaner camels were used mostly for carrying cargo, meaning that they’re the problem of the rest of our battalion...wherever they are. Hadi moaned once more. *They might hear us*, I thought as I stumbled across the sand dune to reach Hadi with my rifle in my hand. Keep in mind that I had no intention to shoot the camel, I just had to make sure I had some protection in case some Ottoman scout spotted me. By the time I had reached the camel we called “Hadi, *the leader*”, I had noticed the bubbling white foaming from the camel’s mouth. With a sick lurch in my  stomach, I had no other choice but to slowly backed away from the camel, partly because of the smell of the creature, and partly from fear. I was fully aware that Hadi was in an angry state and most likely would attack the first thing he saw and the only thing to do was to let Hadi work out his camel-issues. More wild noises came from Hadi, each groan gradually getting louder and distorted as he shook his head violently from side to side. *Why in Allah’s name is he acting out like that*, I thought as I tried to sneak out of sight. A quick “ROOOOOOOAR” proved my desperate attempt at a peaceful escape to be unsuccessful and Hadi charged at me, teeth bared and foam flying everywhere. Within seconds Hadi had caught up with me and from there on all I remember is the pain. His heavy feet trampled me, knees catching my back, hooves pounding against my limbs, smelling the stench of camel spit, and all I thought was *how am I supposed to quiet him without alerting...them?* Desperate, I tried to gasp for air but I knew that I couldn’t because I was going into a state of asphyxiation, something I learned from my father. The world started to spin around me, spiraling into a sinister darkness, and…

Suddenly the pain was gone and the world came to. Little white dots dominated my vision as I struggled to stand back up, but something was preventing me from sitting up. I realized it was the corpse of the camel. Disgusted, I scrambled away from the dead animal and examined it from a distance. I saw a red blot on its neck spreading across it’s body and I realized that it was shot. But by who? I looked around frantically hoping to see Amir or Ali, or even Isaiah, but to no avail. Then I suddenly noticed the heavy thing I was holding and I dropped my Enfield rifle. I can’t believe I accidentally shot it. But what could I do besides mourn? I left poor Hadi’s corpse and went back to the rest of the sane camels. Except they were gone. *Where in Allah’s name are the rest of the camels?* I thought.

Suddenly a loud barrage of *POWS*  interrupted the silent world of the desert. My ears rang from the gunshots but I still heard the shouts of Ottoman soldiers. I then realized that the other camels ran away from me and Hadi when we had our skirmish and they ran right into the Ottoman camp. I’d bet that the camels got my entire brigade spotted.

I climbed to the top of a sand dune to see if I can get a better view of the battle between my friends and the enemy. By the time I reached the top I was dripping with sweat and my heart was heavy with fear. What if I saw one of my dear friends wounded, or worse, dead? What I saw was a messy arrangement of dead Ottoman soldiers and Amir, Ali and Isaiah knocking down more soldiers. They actually were winning! It was at that moment when I looked up and saw an impenetrable wall of dust only a few hundred yards away. I… I tried to get their attention before the haboob hit the camp, but they were too busy in battle, ears shot by gunfire I’d bet. I had no other choice but to wait and hope the Ottomans won’t try to ambush my brigade in the middle of the sandstorm. Except… I could have joined them in battle.

Racing to beat the oncoming wall of dust from reaching my friends I stumbled down the sand dune with my Enfield in my hand. How the Ottoman soldiers did not see me I will never know. I managed to reach a crate right before we all were attacked by the haboob. I climbed into the crate, shut the lid and waited. Luckily this time around was much shorter than the other and I climbed out of it in about fifteen minutes.

When I now think of it, I do not think I have experienced anything as excruciating as those fifteen minutes. The smell of sweet wood and iron filled my nose for a while until more sand started to pour in between the cracks of the crate. Oh how the sand of the storm lashed my face as my box started to fill up. *Is it possible to drown in sand*? I thought when half of the box was filled with sand. But what was truly the worst thing about being stuck in the crate was the uncertainty of the lives of my friends. I only heard the screams of the storm, not able to hear gunfire… did that mean that all of my friends died? Are they not able to shoot because they are dead or is the haboob just too loud? Oh Allah I wanted to climb out and check, but there was no point in doing so: I would only endanger my own life...Right? what would be the worst that could happen? Oh right, if my friends are alive then they could accidentally shoot me if they are not able to see me.

After the storm ended I ran towards my friends, but by the time I reached them I saw one of them was sitting against a metal grate that was splattered with blood.

“AMIR!” I yelled, not knowing what else to say. I dropped down on my knees so we were eye level. I saw a gaping hole in his chest but when I tried to touch it he slapped my hand away with what little energy he had. “Oh Amir” I cried, but he didn’t respond, only looking at me. His eyes were no longer filled with the humorous tint that he usually had. His eyebrows were not creased with worry. His cheeks suddenly seemed to pale. He only looked at me and after what felt like an eternity, he started to giggle. I sat there with worry, but he continued to laugh, much like how he did after we were separated from our battalion. Then he went silent and his eyes went blank.

Ali and Isaiah continued to shoot over their covers, as if they hadn’t even noticed Amir’s death. It may be possible that they didn’t even notice Amir’s death. Then next thing I knew, down went Ali and Isaiah. Before I could even comprehend what happened I felt the barrel of a gun on the back of my head and a voice I did not recognize said “Make a move and you’re next”. I shut up, put my hands above my head and just like that, I was a prisoner of war.

*March 13, 1916*,

We have been traveling for a full day and now at night is the only time where I was allowed to write in this journal. I feel like these entries are the only thing keeping me sane after the deaths of my friends. I think, nah, I *know* that I have not fully processed the deaths of my friends. I know I should feel some guilt, but everything happened so fast… I just remember Amir’s eyes going blank, watching Ali and Isaiah fall to the ground and before I could have even looked at their bodies I saw there were guns pointed at me. It scares me that I do not feel as bad as I should have...am I going insane?

With all this free time I’ve been thinking about my life before signing up into the Imperial Camel Corp. I remember hearing about how the war will be over so quickly… the World War, not the Arab Revolt. But of course if it weren’t for this... World War, then I wouldn’t even have the opportunity to fight for Arab freedom. Right before getting captured, I was shooting a “Short Magazine Lee Enfield”: a *British* gun. If it weren’t for the British involvement, the fight for Arab freedom wouldn’t go past two months! Of course, as I learned from the heated debates between my parents and our neighbors, the British were only using the Arab Revolt to their advantage since they needed a way to weaken the Ottoman Empire and supplying our rebellion would supposedly destroy the Ottomans from the inside. I didn’t care that the British were emotionally distant to our cause; they supplied us with soldiers, artillery and machine guns. Hell, they were generous enough to supply some of the higher ranked Ottoman soldiers armored cars and motorcycles, which certainly run faster than any camel I’ve ever seen!

...I sometimes wonder why I’m fighting. Is it because I was so kindly asked from our “fearless leader” Hussein ibn Ali? Or is it because of Prince Feisal, the man who had inspired the many different Arab tribes to fight not as a single but as a group of different tribes fighting against a common enemy? Could I really blame him though? Now that I think about it, it must not be easy to be the leader of so many different Arab tribes: with all the disputes between tribe leaders, Feisal must spend most of his time trying to settle these disputes. So I guess I cannot blame him. Can I really blame a single person for all of my misery? Well, besides myself. Well, I guess I know why I’m fighting, or at least I know what I’ve been told to fight for. I was fighting for the freedom of the Arab states from the Ottoman empire, if the issue could be stated so simply. Is it so wrong that some Arab states looked at the surge of nationalism in the rest of the world and thought that an independent Arab state would be the best outcome? Of course whenever the Arabs showed a sense of ethnic nationalism the Ottomans would immediately try to repress them, causing deeply-rooted issues between the Ottomans and the Arabs. At least this is what my father told me before I left for the military.

The Ottomans are horrible to me. With the Arabs, their hospitality were legendary: a stranger would be showered with respect and celebrated .There would often be feasts for all strangers that would wonder upon a tribe, and even the women of the tribe would show courtesy to the newcomer. That’s not to say that they aren’t women with the Ottomans which begs the question why on Allah’s-world is there women at the military camp. It doesn’t look like they are treated much better than me. It looked as if they all lived very strict lives, most women wearing clothes similar to what the women at home wore: black loose fitting clothes and the required bourque in public.  Well, the Ottomans are not nearly that nice, or at least not as nice to their prisoner of war whom they killed all of his friends

At least the man guarding me seems like a genuinely nice man. He does not seem like a person who would go ahead and beat someone for no reason, unlike some of the other *evil* Ottomans I’ve seen. As I look around to all of the other soldiers, they all are straddling Mauser bolt-action rifles. Of course they had German guns. I think I even spotted a mounted Maxim machine-gun, which simply made my blood boil. The Maxim was a purely British gun before the Germans had to remake as their own. And just like the Germans, the Ottomans loved to take the ideas of others and use them as their own.  They are a disgusting, primarily Turkish  people, with their constant poking and laughing at me, my only protection is my guard who shuns away the other soldiers when they push me around as I am there “little new slave”. I heard that the Ottoman military was mostly comprised of Turks, but I thought this was only an urban legend, but judging purely by looks it seems as if that was true. It makes me wonder why there are only Turks in the military? Could the Ottomans not find any other ethnicities to fight for them? Only Allah knows I suppose. Judging by their hygiene and the way they talked with each other, it seemed as if most of them were not educated. But what they lacked in knowledge they made up for through endurance of horrible conditions it seemed as I noticed that many men argued over ammunition and food. The disorder in the camp was evident with their lack of food, which I can only guess is because of the Ottoman Army’s inability to provide to its troops.

In fact, I am pretty sure that it was my guard’s idea to let me write in this journal tonight. And the funny thing is that he looks a little like Amir. He has Amir’s same cheeks, the same eyes, even a similar beard! It kind of feels like Amir is still with me in some way and the guard was some type of vessel for Amir to be with me. Oh no, I have much more to write but it looks like the bloody Ottomans are extinguishing the fires for a night’s rest. Might as well, soon enough I will be a prisoner of war where I won’t be able to write anyways.

*March 14, 1916*

A small British/Arab military battalion attacked the Ottomans that were bringing me to a larger base where I would be made an official POW. I remember seeing the splatter of blood spread out against the sand inches away from me like a paintbrush against a canvas when an Arab shot the Ottoman guarding me. I remember looking into his eyes, and seeing not pain, but confusion. His eyes were watery, his dark cheeks trembling from the wound. Then his eyes went blank, and then I ran. I think that was the first time I realized that the men I have been taught to kill were not merely faceless pawns of evil. When I was running all I thought about was how much the guard resembled Amir, with his dark and rosy cheeks and his large eyes and his… I can’t remember. I  I escaped from the action, not quite towards my saviors, mostly because they were shooting at my direction, but almost perpendicular from the battle. I heard British-accented shouts “for the Arab Bureau!” I turned around, thinking *what the hell was the Arab Bureau*? I felt a tap on my shoulder and my heart skipped a beat. Or a dozen. But then I heard a gruff voice say “It’s alright. I’m here to rescue you.” I turned around to see a white man in full British uniform. “I’m a representative of Gilbert Clayton, one of the heads of the Arab Bureau” he said. I shouted over the ruckus of the battle and asked “What is that?” He took a while to answer, thinking carefully and finally came out with “ We are a British intelligen-” and just like that, a bullet went right through his neck. I didn’t hesitate; I turned around continued to run away from the orchestration of gunshots. Once again, the sudden death of the British man was too quick to register. I just knew that I had to run before that happened to me. But as I ran, I kept on contemplating about what he said, about the *Arab Bureau.* It sounded important, but I guess I’ll never know what it was. Now as I run farther into the desert, I don’t know which was worse: the child-like confusion I saw in the Ottoman soldier's eyes before he died, the closeness I’ve gotten to learning about this “Arab Bureau”, or the fact that I fled from the battle without even considering to help fight. I turned around to see how much distance I put between me and the battle but I felt something whiz past me as I turned around. Whether it was a bullet or a figment of my imagination, I guess I’ll never know because just like that, I ran deep into the mysterious bowels of the desert.

*March 15, 1916*

This is it: my final entry. I am no longer a man, only a reminiscent ghost of one. I have been stripped down, both in material and in spirit. I only had the clothes on my back, only had the memories of my friends. I had nothing left, no sense of humanity left. I cannot be the hero I once dreamed of being. I am only a failure and no one will remember a failure. And no one wants to read the journal of a coward, only the journals of heroes. If I could I would burn this journal. Then no one would know of the failure that was me, Uthman Muhammed. But I ran away and do not have any materials to even make a fire to burn this Allah-forsaken journal. I don’t even have enough resources to live on for an entire week. I could turn around and meet with the Arab forces that freed me from my life as a POW of the Ottomans, but if I lived I would only be in more pain. And of course, if I survive then there would be the guilt. Knowing that I hid in a crate while my friends were in the middle of a battle while a raging dust storm released all hell on them was not something I could live with. I couldn’t even do the one job I was assigned to watch the camels and I even ended up shooting one. I do not deserve to live while all of my friends died in battle…

It is with a heavy soul that I write these last few lines, as there is a haboob on the horizon. Ha-ha isn’t *that* some sort of sick irony. It all started with a haboob, it got worse because of one, and now it will end with a one last hellish storm. Allah have mercy on me

Uthman Abdullah Haytham Mohamed

Works Cited

Adelson, Roger. "Arab Bureau (Cairo)." *Encyclopedia of the Modern Middle East and North Africa*. Ed. Philip Mattar. 2nd ed. Vol. 1. New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2004. 225. *Gale Virtual Reference Library*. Web. 30 Jan. 2015.

Aksan, Virginia H. "Ottoman Empire." *World Book Advanced*. World Book, 2015. Web. 5 Feb. 2015.

"Arab Revolt." *PBS*. N.p., n.d. Web. 5 Feb. 2015. <http://www.pbs.org/lawrenceofarabia/revolt/index.html>.

"Arab Uprising." *World History: The Modern Era*. ABC-CLIO, 2015. Web. 3 Feb. 2015. <http://worldhistory.abc-clio.com/Search/Display/309445?terms=arab+revolt+of+1915>

"Arab Warfare." *PBS*. PBS, n.d. Web. 13 Feb. 2015. <http://www.pbs.org/lawrenceofarabia/revolt/warfare.html>.

"Clothing." *PBS*. PBS, n.d. Web. 13 Feb. 2015. <http://www.pbs.org/lawrenceofarabia/revolt/clothing.html>.

"Dust Storm." *UXL Encyclopedia of Weather and Natural Disasters*. Vol. 2: Avalanche to El Nino. Detroit: UXL, 2008. 229-249. *Gale Virtual Reference Library*. Web. 3 Feb. 2015. <http://go.galegroup.com/ps/retrieve.do?sgHitCountType=None&sort=RELEVANCE&inPS=true&prodId=GPS&userGroupName=lake72770&tabID=T001&searchId=R5&resultListType=RESULT\_LIST&contentSegment=&searchType=BasicSearchForm&currentPosition=2&contentSet=GALE%7CCX3044900016&&docId=GALE|CX3044900016&docType=GALE&role=GVRL>

"Food." *PBS*. PBS, n.d. Web. 13 Feb. 2015. <http://www.pbs.org/lawrenceofarabia/revolt/food.html>.

"Gallipoli: Was the Allied Effort on the Gallipoli Peninsula Doomed from the   
     Start?" *History in Dispute*. Ed. Dennis Showalter. Vol. 8: World War I:   
     First Series. Detroit: St. James Press, 2002. 117-123. *U.S. History In*  
     *Context*. Web. 15 Mar. 2015.

"The Great Arab Revolt." *The Hasemite Kingdom of Jordan*. N.p., n.d. Web. 5 Feb. 2015. <http://www.kinghussein.gov.jo/his\_arabrevolt.html>.

"Hejaz Railway." *Encyclopedia Britannica*. N.p.: n.p., n.d. N. pag. Print. Encyclopedia Britannica.

"Hospitality." *PBS*. PBS, n.d. Web. 13 Feb. 2015. <http://www.pbs.org/lawrenceofarabia/revolt/hospitality.html>.

"The Imperial Camel Corps Page 5 – Cameliers and camels at war." *New Zealand History*. N.p., n.d. Web. 9 Feb. 2015. <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/war/camel-corps/camels-and-cameliers>.

"Lawrence's Gun." Map. *Battle Features*. PBS, n.d. Web. 11 Feb. 2015. <http://www.pbs.org/lawrenceofarabia/features/gun/gun\_1.html>.

"Navigation." *PBS*. PBS, n.d. Web. 13 Feb. 2015. <http://www.pbs.org/lawrenceofarabia/revolt/navigation.html>.

'The Ottoman Army', URL: http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/war/ottoman-empire/multinational-army, (Ministry for Culture and Heritage), updated 6-Aug-2014

Peretz, Don. "Arab Revolt (1916)." *Encyclopedia of the Modern Middle East and North Africa*. Ed. Philip Mattar. 2nd ed. Vol. 1. New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2004. 262-265. *Gale Virtual Reference Library*. Web. 3 Feb. 2015. <http://go.galegroup.com/ps/retrieve.do?sgHitCountType=None&sort=RELEVANCE&inPS=true&prodId=GPS&userGroupName=lake72770&tabID=T001&searchId=R2&resultListType=RESULT\_LIST&contentSegment=&searchType=BasicSearchForm&currentPosition=7&contentSet=GALE%7CCX3424600294&&docId=GALE|CX3424600294&docType=GALE&role=GVRL>

'Rise of Arab nationalism', URL: http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/war/ottoman-empire/rise-of-arab-nationalism, (Ministry for Culture and Heritage), updated 30-Jul-2014

'The Turkish soldier's experience', URL: http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/war/ottoman-empire/turkish-soldier-experience, (Ministry for Culture and Heritage), updated 2-Sep-2014

"Water." *PBS*. PBS, n.d. Web. 13 Feb. 2015. <http://www.pbs.org/lawrenceofarabia/revolt/water.html>.

'Weapons of the Ottoman Army', URL: http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/war/ottoman-empire/weapons-of-the-ottoman-empire, (Ministry for Culture and Heritage), updated 30-Jul-2014

Attribution of Research

1.Adelson, Roger. "Arab Bureau (Cairo)." *Encyclopedia of the Modern Middle East and North Africa*. Ed. Philip Mattar. 2nd ed. Vol. 1. New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2004. 225. *Gale Virtual Reference Library*. Web. 30 Jan. 2015.

* The Arab Bureau was a British intelligence agency that played a huge yet unacknowledged role in the Arab Revolt
* Gilbert Clayton was an army intelligence officer who was in charge of numerous military operations

2. Aksan, Virginia H. "Ottoman Empire." *World Book Advanced*. World Book, 2015. Web.   
     5 Feb. 2015.

* All Ottoman women lived extremely strict lives so they were not able to interact with other males
* They wore black bourque before going out in public
* The lack of female characters in the story is because of gender biases in Ottoman culture

3. "Arab Revolt." *PBS*. N.p., n.d. Web. 5 Feb. 2015. <http://www.pbs.org/   
      lawrenceofarabia/revolt/index.html>.

* Arabs did not fight as a single nation but rather as a bunch of different tribes with a common goal
* Prince Feisal led the coalition of different Arab tribes and spent most of his time trying to settle disputes between tribe leaders
* Most Arabs wore white tunics, sleeveless cloaks, and a *kufiyya*, which is a head cloth
* Because of the British involvement some of the higher ranked soldiers had access to British goods, such as armored cars and motorcycles
* Arabs won the Revolt primarily to the raid operations they had where they would use stealth and attack an enemy when they were not expecting an attack

4. "Arab Uprising." *World History: The Modern Era*. ABC-CLIO, 2015. Web. 3 Feb.   
      2015. <http://worldhistory.abc-clio.com/Search/Display/   
      309445?terms=arab+revolt+of+1915>

* there were some suspicions that the British would go back on their promise that the Arabs would be free once they beat the Ottomans and this proved to be true
* the Arab Revolt happened because many Arab states wanted independence from the Ottoman Empire
* The British invading Syria was an operation that essentially won the Arab Revolt and in the story the characters were almost sent to that operation
* Hussein ibn Ali was the first man who asked for independence from the Ottoman Empire and ended up being an influential leader during the Revolt
* T.E. Lawrence was a real life legend that everyone aspired to be like. He essentially led the Arab Revolt and was extremely respected by Arab tribes
* The British wanted to help the Arab Revolt to weaken their enemy the Ottoman Empire, which is why they gave the Arabs British weapons

5. Dust Storm." *UXL Encyclopedia of Weather and Natural Disasters*. Vol. 2:   
      Avalanche to El Nino. Detroit: UXL, 2008. 229-249. *Gale Virtual Reference*  
      *Library*. Web. 3 Feb. 2015.

* Haboobs, or sandstorms, were very common in the Middle East
* it is a wall of dust and sand that rises a mile above the ground
* visibility is nearly impossible in a haboob
* they can last from 30 minutes to an hours, sometimes longer

6"Gallipoli: Was the Allied Effort on the Gallipoli Peninsula Doomed from the   
     Start?" *History in Dispute*. Ed. Dennis Showalter. Vol. 8: World War I:   
     First Series. Detroit: St. James Press, 2002. 117-123. *U.S. History In*  
     *Context*. Web. 15 Mar. 2015.

* this infamous campaign ended in a stalemate
* was also responsible for making the Imperial Camel Corps popular

7. "Hejaz Railway." *Encyclopedia Britannica*. N.p.: n.p., n.d. N. pag. Print.   
      Encyclopedia Britannica.

* The Hejaz railway was first built to carry people around the Ottoman Empire who were on religious pilgrimages
* Eventually was used by the Ottoman Empire to carry thousands of troops and supplies
* Lawrence of Arabia successfully planned to destroy the railway

8. "Hospitality." *PBS*. PBS, n.d. Web. 13 Feb. 2015. <http://www.pbs.org/   
      lawrenceofarabia/revolt/hospitality.html>.

* The Arabs were known for their hospitality. They often "celebrated" strangers with large feasts
* The Ottomans were not known for their hospitality

9. "The Imperial Camel Corps Page 5 – Cameliers and camels at war." *New Zealand*  
     *History*. N.p., n.d. Web. 9 Feb. 2015. <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/   
     war/camel-corps/camels-and-cameliers>.

* They used Egyptian camels for riding and Bikaner camels for carrying cargo
* All camels they brought into battle were male
* Camels sometimes went crazy from heat exhaustion and attacked people
* People often died from camel attacks
* The Imperial Camel Crop was formed to fight against Ottomans and those who opposed the Arab Revolt
* They often rode in the desert to make sure there wasn't an army gathering in the desert
* The Camel Corps were usually made up of different nationalities: Australian, British, New Zealand, India, and Arabs
* It was rare to have four of the same ethnicities in one group
* The Imperial Camel Corp was made of four main companies that worked separately form each other and each company was made up of four sections, which was made up of seven groups/brigades of four soldiers
* In a raid or skirmish usually they all dismounted their camels and three of the group went to battle while one guy watched the camels
* They learned that camels were easier to control than horses around a battlefield

10. "Lawrence's Gun." Map. *Battle Features*. PBS, n.d. Web. 11 Feb. 2015.   
      <http://www.pbs.org/lawrenceofarabia/features/gun/gun\_1.html>.

* The British gave the Arabs the Short Magazine Lee Enfield (SMLE) which was in use for 60 years
* accurate and held 10 rounds and issued to hundreds of thousands of soldiers in WWI

11. "Navigation." *PBS*. PBS, n.d. Web. 13 Feb. 2015. <http://www.pbs.org/   
      lawrenceofarabia/revolt/navigation.html>.

* Because sand dunes constantly change with the wind the Arabs had to find ways to navigate the desert without relying on sand dunes
* They "detoured" when an obstacle was in the way or used footprints and tracks
* Sometimes they made compasses out of rocks or their own shadows
* Camels were good for navigation as they carried water in their humps and could walk for days on end without getting tired

12. 'The Ottoman Army', URL: http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/war/ottoman-empire/   
      multinational-army, (Ministry for Culture and Heritage), updated 6-Aug-2014

* The Ottoman military was mostly comprised of Turkish soldiers
* this was because Turks were thought to be better soldiers than other ethnicities
* They were also typically poorer than other ethnicities and therefore less educated
* Arab Muslims who did not want to be independent from the Ottoman Empire were the next most common ethnicity

13. Peretz, Don. "Arab Revolt (1916)." *Encyclopedia of the Modern Middle East and*  
     *North Africa*. Ed. Philip Mattar. 2nd ed. Vol. 1. New York: Macmillan   
     Reference USA, 2004. 262-265. *Gale Virtual Reference Library*. Web. 3 Feb.   
     2015.

* The Turkish in the Ottoman Empire tried to suppress Arab nationalism in 1908

14. 'Rise of Arab nationalism', URL: http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/war/ottoman-empire/   
      rise-of-arab-nationalism, (Ministry for Culture and Heritage), updated   
      30-Jul-2014

* Arab nationalism grew because they saw successful nationalist movements in other places around the world
* mostly only the educated and elite were nationalists

15. 'The Turkish soldier's experience', URL: http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/war/   
      ottoman-empire/turkish-soldier-experience, (Ministry for Culture and   
      Heritage), updated 2-Sep-2014

* There were over a million men in the Ottoman army
* Too many men meant that it was hard to get supplies to ever single troop
* Most soldiers suffered from shortages of food, ammunition and equipment
* Turkish soldiers were typically illiterate
* They could easily endure hard problems
* They're ability to endure tough times made them great soldiers in the harsh Ottoman Army

16. "Water." *PBS*. PBS, n.d. Web. 13 Feb. 2015. <http://www.pbs.org/   
      lawrenceofarabia/revolt/water.html>.

* The Arabs used goat skin water bottles and deep wells
* surviving the desert required techniques to utilize water
* Arabs had diets of milk and meat, so they brought goats and used those as part of their diets

17. 'Weapons of the Ottoman Army', URL: http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/war/   
      ottoman-empire/weapons-of-the-ottoman-empire, (Ministry for Culture and   
      Heritage), updated 30-Jul-2014

* The Ottoman's used the Mauser bolt-action rifle-a German rifle
* They also recreated the Maxim machine gun, which was originally a British gun